

## Confidential circular sent to the Portuguese Diplomatic Missions (18 January 1971)

**Caption:** On 18 January 1971, the Portuguese Foreign Ministry sends to its Diplomatic Missions abroad a confidential circular to inform them of the operation and aims of the exploratory talks which began on 7 January in Brussels between Ruy Teixeira Guerra, Head of the Portuguese Delegation, and Edmond Wellenstein, Director-General of Foreign Trade at the Commission of the European Communities.

**Source:** Circular EOI - 2/71, Proc. 49.2/bac/5.7. Lisboa: Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros - Direcção-geral dos Negócios Económicos, 18.01.1971. 3 p.

Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Serviço de Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático, Palácio das Necessidades, Largo do Rilvas, 1399-030 Lisboa. <http://www.min-nestrangeiros.pt/mne/ahd/arquivpt.html>. EOI. M 682.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/confidential\\_circular\\_sent\\_to\\_the\\_portuguese\\_diplomatic\\_missions\\_18\\_january\\_1971-en-095b2257-2bc0-4e39-9789-a548ee1791c0.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/confidential_circular_sent_to_the_portuguese_diplomatic_missions_18_january_1971-en-095b2257-2bc0-4e39-9789-a548ee1791c0.html)

**Last updated:** 05/07/2016



## Confidential circular sent to Diplomatic Missions on the opening of exploratory talks between Portugal and the EEC (18 January 1971)

This circular was sent to the following Diplomatic Missions:

Paris, Bonn, Brussels, The Hague, Rome, Berne, Vienna, London, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen

I have the honour to inform you that 'exploratory talks' began in Brussels on the seventh of this month between the Portuguese Delegation, led by Ambassador Ruy Guerra, and the Delegation from the Commission of the European Communities, led by Edmund Wellenstein, Director-General of Foreign Trade.

Talks with the other EFTA members which are not applying for accession (Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Finland and Iceland) began slightly earlier in the case of the first three, and on 6 and 8 January respectively in the case of the last two.

2. In accordance with the Communities' decision, these initial meetings between the EEC and each of the above-mentioned countries will be organised by the Commission and will be exploratory in nature, seeking to clarify facts on both sides in order to achieve a full understanding of the situation on which future arrangements will be based. On completion of this first fact-finding stage, which is expected to last three to four months, the European Commission will draft a report to be presented to the Council of Ministers. The latter will then decide whether formal negotiations should be opened with each country concerned.

It should be pointed out, however, that despite their exploratory nature, these talks should lead to major progress in the negotiations themselves, since each country's aims will have to be set out – the only way for the Commission to be able to submit a valid report to the Council.

3. The atmosphere of the initial talks between our Delegation and the Commission Delegation, which will henceforth be held regularly at technical level, was satisfactory, although, naturally, it was not possible to secure a clear reaction from the European Commission delegates.

4. In principle, although the particular features of our economic situation will be considered, it may be possible to encompass the Portuguese case within the general context of relations between the Common Market and the countries not applying for accession, which is clearly advantageous for us.

The principle of parallel negotiations between the Common Market and EFTA countries, whether applying for accession or not, is still accepted by the Community itself. In line with this principle, negotiations with all EFTA member countries should be concluded at the same time. This principle, if it is maintained, will also be very advantageous for us.

5. We shall endeavour to keep you informed of the development of relations between Portugal and the Common Market.

Bearing in mind the special nature of the Portuguese case and the need for negotiations to be treated with the utmost caution, would you please ensure that the information forwarded to you is not widely publicised. The regular system of consultation between the EFTA countries has been functioning normally, although without the expected accuracy and latitude, and it would, therefore, not be very appropriate for us to go further than our partners. The policy of relative confidentiality, moreover, is consistent with the wishes of the Community, which should not be antagonised.

Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático -EOI M.682